

REMARKS

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that the Official Action allowed claims 1-2 and 4-14.

Claim 3 was rejected under §102(e) as anticipated by SATO 6,130,884.

Applicant encloses a verified translation of the Japanese priority document 158460/1997, filed June 16, 1997.

SATO has a U.S. reference date equal to its filing date, December 4, 1997. By contrast, the present application has a priority date of June 16, 1997, which is the filing date of the corresponding Japanese Application No. 158460/1997. The accompanying verified English translation of that Japanese priority application perfects the claim to the priority thereof.

Accordingly, as discussed with Examiner Patel by telephonic interview, SATO is not prior art to the present application and the anticipation rejection should be withdrawn. Withdrawal of the anticipation rejection is therefore solicited.

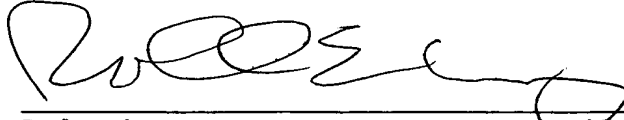
As discussed at the telephonic interview, applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional
fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Roland E. Long, Jr., Reg. No. 41,949
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

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APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following item:

- a verified English translation of Japanese priority
Application No. 158460/1997